

REMARKS

This amendment is filed under 37 C.F.R. §1.312, which permits entry of amendments after allowance and before payment of the issue fee, upon recommendation of the primary examiner.¹

The foregoing amendment amends Claim 23-25 to replace “end” with “terminal” in accord with the recited language of independent Claims 9, 14, and 19; and amends dependent Claim 26 to change the dependency of that claim in view of the similarity and dependence of Claim 25. This change is consistent with Applicants' figures and specification, and is thus not believed to raise a question of new matter.

Furthermore, the proposed amended claims are not believed to require additional search or examination because they merely clarify Applicants' invention and thus further define the scope of already allowed claims. In other words, the proposed amended claims are not believed to be patentably distinguishable from the present claims. Because the present claims are allowed, the proposed claims are believed to be allowable.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

COPY

Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

EHK/STD/kke

I:\ATTY\STD\24'S\240423US\240423US.312 AM.DOC

COPY

¹See MPEP 714.16.